

United States District Court
EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
SHERMAN DIVISION

MARK RAKOWSKI,

Plaintiff,

v.

LENNOX INTERNATIONAL, INC.,

Defendant.

§
§
§
§
§
§
§
§

Civil Action No. 4:19-cv-00883
Judge Mazzant

FINAL INSTRUCTIONS TO THE JURY

MEMBERS OF THE JURY:

It is my duty and responsibility to instruct you on the law you are to apply in this case. The law contained in these instructions is the only law you may follow. It is your duty to follow what I instruct you the law is, regardless of any opinion that you might have as to what the law ought to be.

If I have given you the impression during the trial that I favor either party, you must disregard that impression. If I have given you the impression during the trial that I have an opinion about the facts of this case, you must disregard that impression. You are the sole judges of the facts of this case. Other than my instructions to you on the law, you should disregard anything I may have said or done during the trial in arriving at your verdict.

You should consider all of the instructions about the law as a whole and regard each instruction in light of the others, without isolating a particular statement or paragraph.

The testimony of the witnesses and other exhibits introduced by the parties constitute the evidence. The statements of counsel are not evidence; they are only arguments. It is important for you to distinguish between the arguments of counsel and the evidence on which those arguments rest. What the lawyers say or do is not evidence. You may, however, consider their arguments in

light of the evidence that has been admitted and determine whether the evidence admitted in this trial supports the arguments. You must determine the facts from all the testimony that you have heard and the other evidence submitted. You are the judges of the facts, but in finding those facts, you must apply the law as I instruct you.

You are required by law to decide the case in a fair, impartial, and unbiased manner, based entirely on the law and on the evidence presented to you in the courtroom. You may not be influenced by passion, prejudice, or sympathy you might have for the Plaintiff or the Defendant in arriving at your verdict.

Do not let bias, prejudice or sympathy play any part in your deliberations. All persons, including corporations, are equal before the law and must be treated as equals in a court of justice.

PARTY REFERENCES

As you know, the Plaintiff in this case is Mark Rakowski, who I will refer to as Plaintiff. The Defendant in this case is Lennox International, Inc., who I will refer to as Defendant.

An entity such as Defendant is entitled to the same fair trial at your hands as a private individual. An entity such as Defendant can only function through its employees. Actions taken by supervisory employees acting in the course and scope of their employment are considered to be acts of Defendant.

BURDEN OF PROOF: PREPONDERANCE OF THE EVIDENCE

Plaintiff has the burden of proving his case by a preponderance of the evidence. Unless otherwise instructed, you must answer all questions from a preponderance of the evidence. To establish by a preponderance of the evidence means to prove something is more likely so than not so. Let me give you the example I gave at the beginning of trial. Take the evidence and imagine that it is equally balanced on a scale, so that both sides of the scale are even. Now take a feather

and add it to one side of the scale, so that the scale tips ever so slightly in that direction. That is a preponderance of the evidence.

If you find that Plaintiff has failed to prove any element of his claim by a preponderance of the evidence, then he may not recover on that claim.

EVIDENCE

The evidence you are to consider consists of the testimony of the witnesses, the documents and other exhibits admitted into evidence, and any fair inferences and reasonable conclusions you can draw from the facts and circumstances that have been proven.

Generally speaking, there are two types of evidence. One is direct evidence, such as testimony of an eyewitness. The other is indirect or circumstantial evidence. Circumstantial evidence is evidence that proves a fact from which you can logically conclude another fact exists. As a general rule, the law makes no distinction between direct and circumstantial evidence, but simply requires that you find the facts from a preponderance of all the evidence, both direct and circumstantial.

Demonstrative Evidence

Certain exhibits have been presented to you as demonstratives. These items are a party's illustration used to describe something involved in this trial. If your recollection of the evidence differs from the exhibit, rely on your recollection.

Charts and Summaries

Certain charts and summaries have been shown to you solely to help explain or summarize the facts disclosed by the books, records, and other documents that are in evidence. These charts and summaries are not evidence or proof of any facts. You should determine the facts from the evidence.

WITNESSES

You alone are to determine the questions of credibility or truthfulness of the witnesses. In weighing the testimony of the witnesses, you may consider the witness's manner and demeanor on the witness stand, any feelings or interest in the case, or any prejudice or bias about the case, that he or she may have, and the consistency or inconsistency of his or her testimony considered in the light of the circumstances. Has the witness been contradicted by other credible evidence? Has he or she made statements at other times and places contrary to those made here on the witness stand? You must give the testimony of each witness the credibility that you think it deserves.

Even though a witness may be a party to the action and therefore interested in its outcome, the testimony may be accepted if it is not contradicted by direct evidence or by any inference that may be drawn from the evidence, if you believe the testimony.

You are not to decide this case by counting the number of witnesses who have testified on the opposing sides. Witness testimony is weighed; witnesses are not counted. The test is not the relative number of witnesses, but the relative convincing force of the evidence. The testimony of a single witness is sufficient to prove any fact, even if a greater number of witnesses testified to the contrary, if after considering all of the other evidence, you believe that witness.

When knowledge of a technical subject matter may be helpful to the jury, a person who has special training or experience in that technical field is permitted to state his or her opinion on those technical matters. However, you are not required to accept that opinion. As with any other witness, it is up to you to decide whether to rely on it.

Impeachment by Witness's Inconsistent Statement

In determining the weight to give to the testimony of a witness, consider whether there was evidence that at some other time the witness said or did something, or failed to say or do something,

that was different from the testimony given at the trial.

A simple mistake by a witness does not necessarily mean that the witness did not tell the truth as he or she remembers it. People may forget some things or remember other things inaccurately. If a witness made a misstatement, consider whether that misstatement was an intentional falsehood or simply an innocent mistake. The significance of that may depend on whether it has to do with an important fact or with only an unimportant detail.

NO INFERENCE FROM FILING SUIT

The fact that a person brought a lawsuit and is in court seeking damages creates no inference that the person is entitled to a judgment. Anyone may make a claim and file a lawsuit. The act of making a claim in a lawsuit, by itself, does not in any way tend to establish that claim and is not evidence.

JUDICIAL NOTICE

You must accept as proved facts of which the Court takes judicial notice. The Court has taken judicial notice that Plaintiff filed this lawsuit on November 29, 2019.

INSTRUCTION REGARDING JUROR QUESTIONS

As I told you in my preliminary instructions, I have given you the opportunity to give me written questions anonymously after a witness testified when you had an important question of the witness that was strictly limited to the substance of the witness' testimony. Remember that I asked you not to be offended if I did not present your question to be answered by the witness. You should not speculate on the answer to any unasked question and you should not speculate on or consider any facts or events outside the testimony and exhibits you have heard and seen in this courtroom.

STIPULATIONS OF FACT

A “stipulation” is an agreement. When there is no dispute about certain facts, the attorneys may agree or “stipulate” to those facts. You must accept a stipulated fact as evidence and treat that fact as having been proven here in court. Here, the parties have stipulated to the following:

- 1) Defendant makes climate control equipment such as heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and refrigeration units for residential, commercial, and industrial uses.
- 2) Plaintiff was employed with Lennox from April 4, 1988 to July 1, 2019.

DUTY TO DELIBERATE AND JUROR NOTES

It is now your duty to deliberate and to consult with one another in an effort to reach a verdict. Each of you must decide the case for yourself, but only after an impartial consideration of the evidence with your fellow jurors. During your deliberations, do not hesitate to re-examine your own opinions and change your mind if you are convinced that you were wrong. But do not give up on your honest beliefs because the other jurors think differently, or just to finish the case.

Remember at all times, you are the judges of the facts. You have been allowed to take notes during this trial. Any notes that you took during this trial are only aids to memory. If your memory differs from your notes, you should rely on your memory and not on the notes. The notes are not evidence. If you did not take notes, rely on your independent recollection of the evidence and do not be unduly influenced by the notes of other jurors. Notes are not entitled to greater weight than the recollection or impression of each juror about the testimony.

When you go into the jury room to deliberate, you may take with you a copy of this charge, the exhibits that I have admitted into evidence, and your notes. You must select a presiding juror to guide you in your deliberations and to speak for you here in the courtroom.

Your verdict must be unanimous. After you have reached a unanimous verdict, your presiding juror must fill out the answers to the written questions on the verdict form and sign and

date it. After you have concluded your service and I have discharged the jury, you are not required to talk with anyone about the case.

If you need to communicate with me during your deliberations, the presiding juror should write the inquiry and give it to the court security officer. After consulting with the attorneys, I will respond either in writing or by meeting with you in the courtroom. Keep in mind, however, that you must never disclose to anyone, not even to me, your numerical division on any question.

You may now proceed to the jury room to begin your deliberations.

SIGNED this 13th day of December, 2021.


AMOS L. MAZZANT
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE